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Another View of the Orange Question.

PORT JERVIS, N. Y., Jan. 25, 1886.
Editor Palatka News:

Your paper of 15th inst. came to hand as usual on time, and from it I learn "Our Boom is Dead."

With not a little curiosity I notice your comments and interviews, as well as the opinions and suggestions of your many correspondents, and therefore learn, that in the opinion of gentlemen who should know whereof they speak, that the trees are only set back, but not killed, although the present crop of fruit is ruined.

To an outsider this looks as if the "Boom" was not so emphatically "Dead" as it seemed to be, and that an effort is being made to reinstate the thing, and in your editorial you suggest that in order to avoid calamities of this kind it is only necessary for the inventive genius of your state, to devise some means of saving the fruit, until such times as the demand would absorb the supply, then the "Boom" may become king again, and the people of all the states in the Union, as well as the British Provinces, and from the other side of the ocean may be again induced help inflate and sustain the thing, until some day when the final collapse must come.

As for saving oranges any considerable length of time after they are gathered, the first thing to be done is to offer a suitable reward for some plan to control the elements, and to regulate the temperature of the atmosphere. I claim that in no other way can oranges be kept any considerable length of time, for the simple reason that their keeping qualities depend entirely upon the temperature and atmospheric conditions, during the formation and growth to maturity of the fruit.

Last season Florida oranges decayed to such an extent that by the time they arrived in the markets of the north many of them were not worth the expense of getting them there. I saw in New York a lot of fruit sold at an average of ten cents a box, two hundred and eighty boxes for twenty-eight dollars, and saw Harris's fruit, as good, I believe as any in the state, offered at seventy-five cents a box. Mr. Harris's consignee told me that his fruit in repacking made a loss of thirty per cent until they stopped shipping. Later in the season they came in good condition. My own fruit showed a loss of over thirty per cent last season. Shipped under same circumstances this season, they showed practically no loss at all, and at the prices obtained this season, the orange crop would not have paid expenses of gathering and transportation, had they arrived in as bad condition as last season.

Can not your people see that the business is immensely overdone already? Will they not realize that in less than ten years, if the trees now set out, live and thrive, the product of the state will exceed ten million boxes of oranges a year, and that a crop of probably less than two million boxes this season, with one-third of it not gathered, has completely broken down the market twice already and only rallied under a suspension of shipping.

Does it require intelligence of the most ordinary character, to comprehend that when a crop of two million boxes breaks our markets, that a crop of ten million boxes, or even half that quantity can not be sold at any price that will pay expenses and that as a consequence, oranges or orange trees, when in excess of the demand are worth no more than the sand in which they grow. I have been informed by two very intelligent gentlemen largely interested in the orange business, both in this country and in Europe, that there are more orange trees set out in Florida than in all the orange producing countries of the earth.

Is it not wise to look at this thing square in the face, and a duty to sound a note of alarm? Instead of inflating the orange business under the delusion that after five years work every man may have an orange grove, upon which he can live and support his family in ease and comfort for the remainder of his life; is it not better to say that there are vastly too many trees and groves now?

My own opinion is that it would be a great benefit to the state if every young orange tree, say under five years of age should be totally annihilated, and I sincerely hope I will lose twelve hundred out of my two thousand trees, and believe it would be a great blessing to those who have invested their all, in the business, if the same loss I welcome and hope for in my own case, could be extended to theirs.

If I have given you a few ideas, and if you think well of them, I hope to see you along with the intelligent gentlemen of the press, give some note of warning and not let the land speculators have it all their own way. Too many of them I fear are only too anxious to unload their lands at high prices, regardless of the utter ruin to the purchaser, who may be induced to embark in the orange business by the tricks and devices of whole page advertisements, and wholesale lying and deception.

Yours very truly,
CHAS. ST. JOHNS.

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